

NAME: 後藤 Goto Gen DATE OF BIRTH: 1899 PLACE OF BIRTH: Fukushima
Age: 76 Sex: M Marital Status: M Education: High school

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1917 Age: 18 M.S.Y.Y. Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Farmer 2. _____ 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Selma 2. Parlier 3. Madera
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church
Community organizations/activities: Director of Fresno Japanese Assn.
Principal of Japanese Language School

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Fresno
Name of relocation center: Jerome, Arkansas bor
Dispensation of property: Leased land to neighbor names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: Farmed
Left camp to go to: Madera

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: 1945
Address/es: 1. Madera 2. _____
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 5/8/75 Place: Madera

Interviewer unlisted

Q: What is your name?

A: My name is Gen Goto.

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Fukushima Prefecture.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born in 1899. I am 76 years old now.

Q: What did your father do in Japan?

A: I was born in February, and father came to America in July of that year. Before I graduated from junior high school mother came to America by a ship to join her husband. She was separated from father for 13 years. I went to Tokyo to attend Iwakuni Railroad School, but as that school was not recognized by the Ministry of Education I could not go to a higher school, so I attended a high school. When I graduated from high school and was thinking about going to college, my father's farming partner came back to Japan and asked me to come to America. That is how I came to America.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was 18 years old.

Q: How was the life in Japan without your father?

A: I was 5 months old when he left home so I did not know his face, but my grandparents took good care of me, so the life was good.

Q: What kind of a person was your mother?

A: She was such a model woman that she was written up in the newspaper.

Q: What did the newspaper write about her?

A: She was a virtuous woman who took good care of her in-laws, and also worked like a man in the field as grandfather was old. When her story came out in the paper, our neighbor sent a copy to my father. In those days many Isseis in America gambled, and so did my father, but when he read that paper he thought he was wrong, and he quit gambling right away. I heard that it is hard to quit gambling, but as my father quit it completely I admire him for that.

I came to America not to farm but to study. When I went to school they put me in the 4th grade of a grade school. I had studied calculus in Japan, but as girls said, "NO talk, no talk" to me I got angry and quit school after 5 days. It was the time the World War started and the business was getting brisk, so I thought I would make a fortune and started working as my father's partner.

Q: Was your mother a gentle person?

A: She was a stout-hearted woman. I was an only child but she did not spoil me. Neighbors used to say, "Oshin-san, why don't you treat Kenchan ~~him~~ with more love." But my grandparents spoiled me. When mother came to America 4 children were born in 4 years one after another. I thought my parents were doing well in America, but with 4 children and father changing land he leased year after year it was not easy. Yet they kept on sending me school expenses. I still shed tears of gratitude when I think about that. I thought my parents made

good money in America, so I thought nothing about my parents sending me school expenses, but when I came here I ~~was~~ thankful to them for the first time.

Q: Your father was a man of strong character, too, wasn't he?

A: He was a very scrupulous and fastidious man. I did not want to farm but father forced me to do it, so it was very hard. In those days there were many yobiyose youth like me. As there was not much parental affection, 7 Or 8 out of 10 youths left their homes.

Q: Where did you get on board the ship to come to America?

A: From Yokohama. In those days there were strict examinations of Trachoma and roundworms. I had Trachoma before, so I failed the examination twice. If I failed one more time I was going to give up coming to America, but I passed. I came to San Francisco on ~~Nihon~~ Nihon Maru.

Q: Do you remember things that happened on board the ship?

A: Nothing much but I remember landing ^{on} Hawaii and bought banana.

As banana was cheap another young man and I bought a big bunch of banana, took them back to the ship and ate them all before we arrived at San Francisco. I drank soda water for the first time in Honolulu. I cannot forget how good it tasted. When I was a student a bowl of noodle was 2 sen but I could not afford it, so I bought 1 sen worth of baked potatoe and shared it with friends in the dormitory.

Q: What kind of people were on board the ship?

A: There were many yobiyose people.

Q: Were there many brides on board the ship?

A: Yes, there were some. I came to Madera in 1920. In 1921 the picture brides could not come here any more, so my father told me to go back to Japan to find a bride. In those days there were Nisei women of marrying age but they were not suitable for us. We could stay in Japan only 2 weeks and had to find brides during that time. As I could not find one I was disappointed and was coming back when I found one. When I was coming back with my wife, Yokohama was full of young couples.

Q: You married quite young, didn't you?

A: I was not going to get married until I was 30, but I married at 25.

Q: What year did you come to America?

A: In 1917.

Q: Who found a bride for you in Japan?

A: My grandmother did.

Q: When you met your father for the first time in San Francisco, did you recognize him right way?

A: I had seen his photograph before so I could recognize him.

Later my father told me that when he took me aroundnd San Francisco sightseeing, I was not a bit impressed. As I lived in Tokyo, Marunouchi district was not much different from San Francisco so I was not surprised. My father used to tell his friends, "I showed my son around San Francisco thinking he would like it, but he was not impressed."

Q: Did you call your ^{father}~~husband~~, "Otosan" (Dad) then?

A: I called him "Otosan" but not with affection. I don't think we should send away our children. In those days many Isseis sent their children back to Japan to get Japanese education. Doctor Okonogi of Fresno used to tell me, "People send their children to Japan, but that is out of the question. They may become great, but there is nothing worse than losing affection between parents and children, so don't send your children to Japan." As the years went ^{felt}~~go~~ by we ~~feel~~ more affection towards the parents.

Q: When you came to America, where did you go first?

A: I went to Selma first. Father was leasing land there, but as he did not good results there we moved to Parlier.

Q: What did he grow?

A: Grape and peach. At Parlier he farmed 80 acres. When the World War I broke out he made profit. In those days we could not buy land because of the anti-Japanese land act, but he took all kinds of measures to evade the law and bought the land here. Many Japanese came to Madera in 1918 and 1919.

Q: Did you come here then?

A: We came here in 1920.

Q: How many acres did you buy?

A: Mr. Ishizaki and my father bought 100 acres as partners. There was no trouble for 7 years. but as children were growing older they decided to divide the land in two to avoid any trouble in the future, and each got 50 acres. Then the Depression came. Our side was all right as we had grape and my brothers helped, but
8 Mr. Ishizaki could not manage it so he was going to abandon the land. If he abandon the land we had to abandon the land or take over his land as there was one deed. One night our whole family got together and discussed what to do. With tears in his eyes my father said, "I came here after experiencing hardship in Hawaii, and built it up to what it is today. If we abandon this land I came to America for nothing. I am going to turn back the clock 10 years and try hard, so I want you to hold out." My brothers and sisters all agreed to do so, and gradually things got better.

Q: Didn't you have a hard time during the Depression?

A: Of course. Many people sold their land and moved to Los Angeles area as they could not make a living. We planted the grape saying, "Grape cost at least 3.5 cents a pound. We hope it will not go under 3 cents. If it is 3 cents we can barely manage to live. The price of the grape tumbled down to 35 dollars a ton at the lowest time. We could make a living because we did not hire people, but if we hired people we could not have made it. My brothers used to go to work as soon as they came home from school.

Q: What was growing on the other half of the land?

A: They had grape and appricot and other small things^{and} The soil was not too good, so we put higher price on this half. We drew lots in front of a lawyer to decide which half to get, so there was no complaint. Most partners quarrelled and split, but we were partners for 7 years and we did not quarrel and split. We are still associating with each other.

Q: What other problems were there besides the price of grape dropped?

A: I could not make a living with grape, so I grew vegetables and took them to the market for 4 years. One brother went to U.C. Berkeley, and the other brother helped, so I gave him half of the land. We could not make a living on grape so we grew vegetables for 4 years. I picked vegetables and took them to the market at midnight. In summer we were stung my mosquitoes. If we could not sell all the vegetables I went around stores in Fresno selling the left overs. Women were not in good mood if we didn't sell all, but they were in good mood if we sold all the vegetables. After I slept for about an hour it was time to get vegetables ready for the market. I did this for 4 years. When I think back on that time I am amazed how I could do that.

Q: What kind of vegetables did you grow?

A: Cucumber, burdock, onion^{tomatoe} and most any kind of vegetable.

Q: What time did you get up in the morning?

A: I didn't hardly sleep. In those days people from stores came to market around 1 a.m., so we had to be there before then. I stayed in the market till around 8 a.m., and if there were any left overs I went to town to sell them. Sometimes I did not get home till 2 p.m. Then I slept about an hour. Of course the market is closed on Sundays so I slept, but I had to take care of vegetables even on Sundays. Not only vegetable but I had to take care of grape.

Q: Then you didn't hardly sleep, didn't you?

A: Yes, I am amazed at myself for working so hard as small as I am. I was young and strong then.

Q: How many children did you have?

A: I had 3 children. One son lives here and two of them live in Los Angeles now.

Q: Did things gradually get better?

A: Yes, it did.

Q: What did you do about grape when you were growing vegetable?

A: I was growing gape, too.

Q: But you couldn't sell grape, couldn't you?

A: Yes, we could. At grape harvest time we did not sell much vegetable as we were busy.

~~Q: You couldn't live just on grape as the price was low, wasn't it?~~

~~A: Yes~~

Q: You couldn't live just on grape as the price was low, couldn't you?

A: No, we couldn't. There were 10 people in my family. In those days they sold rice cheap before the New Years, so we bought 20 to 30 sacks of rice for the whole year. In those days we ate just rice. After we went to camp we learned to eat bread and drink coffee. Before the war people use to give us tea and coffee as return for obituary gifts. We had a shelf full of coffee, so we used to give them away. Now I eat rice only for supper.

Q: Things became better, didn't they?

A: Yes, it did. In 1921 Shinwa Kai was organized in Madera, and celebrated the New Years in the storage room. In 1923 the Japanese Language School was founded. When I was 26 years old I was recommended as one of 3 ~~directors~~ of Fresno Japanese Association. Three young men from Central California were recommended for the post and I was one of them.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: Fresno Japanese Association ^{took care of} ~~did~~ the work of the consulate, such as death and marriage reports. Also made efforts at the time of the Land Act, and worked as a mediator if there were trouble among Japanese. Since I was 26 until the war broke out I served as ~~a~~ ^{director} of the Fresno Japanese Association, president of the Shinwa Kai and principal of the Japanese Language School.

Q: Were you the only director?

A: There were two directors.

Q: What kind of work did you do as a director?

A: When the anti-Japanese Land Act came up in California Assembly we needed money to lobby in order to stop the passage of the bill. We also needed money to hire secretaries to do the work. When some prefectures in Japan had disaster we had to collect money to send to them. We had to collect donations for all kinds of things. We had 3 teachers for the Japanese Language School. When one of them quits we had to meet and discuss what to do. Before the war I used to attend meetings every night.

Q: What other work did the Japanese Association do?

A: We had to report the death ^{and} marriages as we were all Japanese citizens. We also had to buy land and make a Japanese cemetery. We had meetings all the time, but but moreover we had to collect donation. At the time I came here Mr. Nakatsuchi was working hard for the Japanese Association. Whenever we saw him we used to say, "Mr. Nakatsuchi must have come to ask for donation again." Later I used to say, "You must be saying Goto must have come for donation." I don't know how much I walked collecting donation. Last year I received the Sixth Order of Merit.

Q: How did you feel when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: I thought, "They did it!" Before the war started Dr. Okonogi was angry at America for not selling oil to Japan.^{so} We thought, "Well done!" We shouldn't have felt that way as we owe to America, but we could not help feeling that way. Three days later the stand still order was out and it was posted on telephone poles. In May we were taken to the Assembly Center in Fresno and then sent to Jerome Arkansas.

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Q: What were you doing on December 7, 1941?

A: I don't remember what I was doing.

Q: Did you find out about the war that Sunday for the first time?

A: I forgot, but when I found out about the attack I thought, "They did it!" and I felt good. It took 5 days and 4 nights to go from Fresno to Arkansas by a slow train. I thought the war would end in no time. When the train climbed to the top of Rocky Mountain I saw hundreds of people were gathered there. I found out that they were going to be trained for the winter flights. Then I realized that the war would last a long time. America started training soldiers after the war broke out.

Q: Did you think the war would not last long because you thought Japan would lose the war?

A: No, I thought Japan would win the war. I didn't think Japan would lose the war. I thought the Marines would run away, but I found out that Americans have American spirit just as Japanese have Japanese spirit.

Q: What did you do with your land when you went to camp?

A: I leased it to our neighbor. with the agreement that I would receive one fourth of the profit. Fortunately, he was a good man, but when we came back our land was confiscated due to the Land Act. After we came back from the camp I worked 7 years to kill the Land Act, but what helped disolve the problem was the distinguished service of the 442 Battalion, so I am very grateful to those who died. Without them the land problem could not have been solved.

Q: What did you do with your furnitures and belongings?

A: I put in one room and Mexicans were living here, and a white man was taking care of my ranch. I was very fortunate because he was a good man.

Q: Were everything here when you came back?

A: May be one or two items were missing. When we came back a white man asked me what we ate in the camp. I told him that we were given enough sugar, chicken, bacon, apple and everything else. He told me that he did not have enough sugar nor bacon. The camp was ran by the Army so we had plenty of food. I think America treated us well because there were some American citizens in the camp. I do not think they would have treated us that well is there were only enemy aliens.

Q: You were lucky, weren't you?

A: Yes, I was. When I look back on my life I am very thankful that I was very fortunate. My children are all getting along well with each other, so I am very fortunate.

Q: How did you feel when you saw the camp for the first time?

A: Fresno Assembly Center was built on the Fairground where I used to go, but when we went to Arkansas thousands of carpenters were still building the barracks. It was as cold as in my hometown in Fukushima, but there was a big iron stove in the room and there were plenty of logs. Sometimes it was so hot that we could not stay in the room and went outside.

Q: Did you work in the camp?

A: I did not work at first, but as the government let young people work outside there was a shortage of workers, so they asked me to work. We were paid \$16 a month, and some professional people received \$19. They gave us clothes and overcoats. Children received \$3.50 a month for clothing allowance. There was a family with about 15 children. They received a big amount of money. Some thrifty people brought home a big check from the camp.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: I farmed but it was like playing. The soil was red and there were snakes. We grew some vegetables to eat in the camp and put them in sacks. We worked for a couple of hours and then we picked mushrooms and knots of trees to make all kinds of things. During the war Japanese in America were the luckiest. My wife had to escape from the incendiary bombs every night in Japan.

Side 2

An American said, "We gave Japanese rest." That was true. Before the war we worked hard, but during the war we led easy lives. Everyday we heard false rumor that Japan was winning the war, so we were happy.

Q: Did someone have a shortwave radio??

A: Everyday a friend of mine came from the far end of the camp to tell me what kind of news he heard that day. I think the news came from Brazil or somewhere in South America.

Q: Were there many happenings in the camp?

A: Yes, there were. First of all we were asked which side we would be loyal to, Japan or America. There were two Buddhist priests in Jerome who were loyal to Japan. Every morning while it was still dark they ran around the camp wearing headbands and shouting. I did not go out to see but I heard that they did calisthenics and shouted, "Banzai". My partner Mr. Ishizaki was in that group. Those who created disturbance were sent to Tule Lake. Mr. Ishizaki came to me and told me that he was going to Tule Lake to render devoted service to Japan. When I asked him, "How can you render devoted service to Japan in Tule Lake?" he could not answer me. I said to him, "We are living in luxury here although we are enemy aliens. I don't think the war will last long, so why don't you sit tight and wait here," He then said he would cancel his transfer to Tule Lake. Next morning on his office to cancel his transfer he met a friend who asked him where he was going. When Mr. Ishizaki told him that he decided not to go to Tule Lake as I talked him out of it, his friend said, "That is out of the question. Aren't you a Japanese?" Mr. Ishizaki was a timid man so he went to Japan.

Q: Did he go to Japan on an exchange ship?

A: He sent his wife and children back to Japan, and he came back here as he had the land here. He told me that he had rendered service to Japan and came back, but what he did was creating disturbance revolting against America. I was very angry and wanted to tell him off but I didn't as he was a timid man. He told me that his wife went to Japan on an exchange ship but transferred to a Japanese ship

on the way. They thought Japan had won the war. Mr. Ishizaki's sons also went to Japan. When they went to Yokohama they were served steamed barley but they could not eat it. They did not eat for 3 days but they became hungry so they ate it. At that time they realized that Japan had lost the war. They all came back here after all. Mr. Ishizaki wrote to me saying, "I want to go back to America, but I am afraid people in Madera will laugh at me." I wrote back to him saying, "During the war everybody in the camp was out of his mind although they did not think so. You are a good man so people in Madera will not laugh at you. Come back without worries."

Q: Were you asked if you would be loyal to America or not in the camp?

A: I don't remember, but that question caused trouble. Some people said we should be loyal to Japan and others said since we live in this country why don't we say we would be loyal to America. I think I was in the latter group.

Q: What did you think about Niseis going into military service?

A: At first some young men volunteered for service, but since then young men were drafted little by little, and my son was drafted, too. When he got on board a ship in Maryland the war ended.

Q: That was the time before the 442nd Bn. did distinguished service, wasn't it?

A: We did not know the existence of such battalion. If we mentioned about volunteering we would have been beaten up, so Nisei leaders were in danger.

Q: Your sons were ~~were~~ not of draft age, weren't they?

A: One of my sons was drafted. When the boys ~~were~~ drafted into service we held send-off parties in the camp. I could not help crying when I thought how their parents felt sending their sons from the camp.

Q: Niseis are American citizens, aren't they?

A: Yes, that is true. They are citizens so it is natural that they go to war, and the parents ~~had to~~ let them go. That is Bushido. We ⁱⁿ cried ⁱⁿ those occasions, but after ~~a~~ while we forgot the sorrow and we gathered and ~~passed~~.the time chatting. We did nothing for 4 years. When we went into the camp we were not allowed to take long knives nor money. Three days after we came home, a big truck brought us all the things my father made with tree knots and boxes he made in the camp free of charge. I was moved by the greatness of this country. I went back to Japan six times after the war and told young people that it was good that Japan lost the war to America, because if it ^{had} lost the war to Russia the country would have been divided into two like Korea.

Q: Do you have any other recollection of the life in the camp?

A: I don't have much recollection. I just led an easy life.

Q: Don't you like to go fishing?

A: When I was little in Japan there wasn't anything to do, so fishing was the only thing I did. I caught loach, carp and other fish. Before the dam was built I could catch ^{salmon} ~~si~~amon and bass. I don't know how many thousand of fish I killed. Since then I decided to quit fishing.

In olden days when a horse walked slowly in summertime, I used to whip the horse shouting, "Giddy up! Giddy up!". Then the horse looked at me with a reproachful eyes. When I think about it I don't think I can go to heaven but will go to hell. Looking back, I think I did cruel things. People ask me to go fishing but I don't go. I do not tell them why I would not go.

Q: Did you come back here straight from the camp?

A: Yes, I did. The lease of the land was going to expire on November 1. My landlord told me that he would get the Mexicans out so come back by November 1. As I was the last one to come back, other Americans seemed to have said Goto could not come back. I came back by Nov. 1.

Q: Did you come back after the war ended?

A: Yes, I did. I was fortunate to have a good landlord. I don't know how the future will be, but looking back, I had a very good life.

Q: Did the land belong to you?

A: No, it didn't.

Q: Didn't you pay off the loan yet?

A: No, not yet. In those days the interest of the Federal Loan was only 3% for 20 years. Now we have bought 80 acres here, and my brother bought 80 acres, so we own 160 acres.

Q: Was the Land Act enacted?

A: I think the land bought before 1913 was all right. Since then the Anti-Japanese Land Act was established. When we came back some lawyers said that the parents cannot live with the child in whose name the land belonged. At first we established a land corporation with two white people and Mr. Ishizaki. Then we had to hold a meeting every month in front of a lawyer, so it was too much trouble. After that we borrowed names of Niseis who had American citizenship. Meanwhile, my brother who is a citizen became of age so we put the land in his name, and then my son's name.

Q: Was there any problem when you came back?

A: Two families had their land confiscated.

Q: Was your land confiscated, too?

A: No, not then but the following time ours and two other people's land were going to be confiscated but I compromised by paying much money. However, the money was refunded later. There was Oyama case. Then we worked hard for 7 years to kill the Land Act spending a lot of money, and finally we won so now we can sell or buy land.

Q: Did you work to kill the Land Act with people in Stockton, too?

A: Yes, all the Japanese in America worked towards it. Mr. Koda was the leader.

Q: Did Mr. Asano of San Francisco work for it, too?

A: Yes, he did. He was a great man. Japanese people wanted a newspaper but we could not start it as we did not have money, so they sold bonds. Mr. Asano came to my house so I bought \$500 worth of bonds. With the money from the sale of bonds Mr. Asano started the Nichi-Bei newspaper after the war. I still get 4% interest as it is the law.

Q: Did things became better after you won victory over the Land Act?

A: Yes. As we won I acquired the American citizenship.

Q: Did you experience any hardship after you came back?

A: No, we didn't. The work was good, grape was good, and workers were good. Before the war I bought a new car. My lawyer told me to store it in a garage as it is too good to sell. After I came back I took it out of the garage and drove it around. I was stopped 3 times, not by traffic police but by private citizens who asked, "You have a nice car. Won't you sell it to me?" Nobody had a nice car like mine in those days.

Q: Looking back, when was the hardest time for you?

A: It was when my former wife died of cancer. When my father and mother were ill for a long time, my present wife took care of them.

Q: When was that?

A: It was 13 years ago. My wife took care of both of them.

The period I was growing vegetables was pleasant rather than hard. At that time it was hard but when I look back it makes me smile. After my parents passed away my wife became nervous for about 3 years.

Q: She was exhausted from taking care of the sick, wasn't she?

A: She went to a psychiatrist who asked her life story. She is a very unfortunate woman. Her father died when she was 3, and her mother remarried, but her husband was not a good man so she had a hard life. ^{My wife} ~~She~~ had many step brothers and sisters so she took care of them and had a hard time. That kind of thing was affecting her health.

T: I think spiritual hardship is worse than physical hardship.

G: Yes, worry is the worst thing.

Q: How long have you been living here?

A: Since 1920, so it has been 53 years. Fortunately, I went back to Japan 6 times after the war.

Q: As an Issei who overcame all kinds of hardships what do you want to teach young Sanseis and Yonseis?

A: Japan should not forget etiquette. I tell young people that if Japanese do not ^{have} ~~ettiquette~~ [^] they will be the same as Mexicans. Now they are getting like that. Niseis are still good, but Sanseis are not the same. If I tell them such thing they say I am behind the times. We fought hard against anti-Japanese sentiment to own land, but I am afraid only 2 or 3 out of 10 Sanseis would like to farm. That is my worry. One Nisei leader told me the other day that Sanseis and Yonseis want to become salarymen doing easy work but it is best to own land. Not many people in town have \$100,000 in cash even though they own houses, but if you own 40 acres of grape it will be worth \$100,000 and the price of land never goes

down. That is why he tells Sanseis and Yonseis to become farmers and own land. I agree with him, but I cannot say that because my English is not good. I am afraid Sanseis and Yonseis are going to leave the land. That is what I regret.

T: Sanseis in San Francisco have organized Kimochi Kai and working hard to serve the Isseis.

G: I think it is a very good thing, but we don't have that here. We don't have the leaders here.

Q: What was your impression of Isseis when you came here as a Yobiyose?

A: I don't think any Issei left Japan thinking they would go to America to drink and gamble. Like my father, they came here with determination of making money and go back to Japan in 3 years. When they came here they were young and had friends so they could not work all the time. They played pool, drank, gambled and went to restaurants. They could not help doing that as they were human. I do not condemn them for gambling or doing other things. I admire them for bringing up Niseis and giving them education even though they gambled or drank. Before the war some sales women did not serve us when we went shopping. But when we came back they were very good to Japanese. I think that was due to the distinguished service of the 442nd Battalion. I am very grateful to them.

In those days women who graduated from high school came here as picture brides, and they had to work in the field. They could not get divorced as children were born. Issei men who used to drink and gamble became settled down after they were married. Issei men experienced hardships, but I think Issei women had harder lives. They had to raise 5 to 6 children and work in the field from morning till night. At night they washed clothes till late. I think women's unselfish service was greater than men's. The fact that ^{now} we see many fine Niseis ^A is due to Issei parents who gave them education. As we Isseis did not have education in Japan we wanted to give our children education. When I was the principal of a Japanese Language School I told people around here to send their children to school. When our children went to high school almost all Japanese sent children to high school but most Mexicans did not go to high school. Mexicans who owned land sent their children to high school but rest of them remained as farm laborers for generations

Side 3

Q: How did Japanese start owning land?

A: Japanese were farm laborers at first. Then they leased land and became sharecroppers. When world War I started things got better so Japanese bought land with the money they saved.

Q: Did Mexicans buy land when they made money?

A: They do not save money. Mexicans spend money as soon as they earn it. When they work they complain about 3 or 5 cents more an hour, but when they go to stores they buy expensive items from left to right. Japanese save money for the future, but Mexicans live one day at a time. Sometimes they borrow money in advance. That is why they cannot own land but work as farm laborers for generations.

Q: What is the difference between Japanese and Mexicans?

A: One is the education. The other is the custom. Japanese saved money from olden days. They came to this country to make a fortune and go home in about 3 years, so they saved.

Q: When did you decide to settle down here?

A: After the war ended. I wanted to go back to Japan as I did not want to live here because of the anti-Japanese sentiment. When the war ended and Japan was defeated I heard that Japan had shortages of food, so I did not want to consume their food. Since then I decided to settle down here. About 8 out of 10 Japanese wanted to go back to Japan after they made a fortune. I was the the same way.

Q: Do you belong to the Buddhist Church here in Fresno?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: Are you serving as an officer?

A: I am not a devout Buddhist, but when they start a project I am elected as a vice-chairman to collect donation.

Q: Did most picture marriages got along well?

A: I think there were one or two women who eloped with other men, but most of them around here are getting along well.

Q: Are you glad you came to America?

A: Yes, I do. My grammar school was a unique school in Fukushima Prefecture. It was a very small school with only one teacher who taught from the 1st to the 6th grade. This teacher told us

that he had never taught a class like ours. as there were many bright students in our class. One of them became a Doctor of Medicine when he was 35 years old. I was not a bright student so I wanted to become rich. When I went back to Japan I went to visit this classmate in Tokyo. His wife told me to go upstairs as he was with the patient. As I went up the squeaking stairs I thought I was better off than he was. After you lived in America you cannot live in Japan.

T: I think Isseis worked hard.

G: Yes, we did. I think all the first immigrants had hard times. We should be thankful to them. I am afraid young people will gradually lose that kind of idea. That is why a leader like you should keep the record of their footsteps.

Q: Don't you think the Sanseis are spoiled?

A: Yes, they are, but grandfather cannot say that to them as we do not want them to hate us. I decided not to say anything to them. Some Nisei say, "Our parents did not buy us enough toys so we buy our children enough toys." I tell them it is good to buy toys but there is a limit. I say, "It is natural that parents want to buy toys for their children, but we could not afford them. Didn't that do you good?" Children nowadays have too many toys so they throw them around and they are spoiled. They are too extravagant. In olden days we barely made a living so we could not afford them.

Q: Do you think a person should experience hardships?

A: Yes, of course a person should experience hardships. Young people do not understand that. If a person grows up without any care, he will not be happy because he does not know what gratitude is. A person should have a feeling of gratitude.

Q: To labor and experience hardships will make that person proud of himself and gives him self-respect, doesn't it?

A: Yes, that's true. In olden days, ^{old} people used to say, "The young should struggle with adversity." That is the truth. Nobody wants to experience hardships, but if you were put in a circumstance that you have to experience hardships it will make you a happier person.

Q: About how many Japanese live in Madera now?

A: I think there are about 40 families.

Q: About how many people were there before the Depression?

A: I think there were 42 or 43 families then.

Q: Did people who left there during Depression time come back?

A: No, they didn't, but some people came from other places, leasing or buying land after the war. Many people from Sacramento and Florin area moved to Central California. ~~because~~

Q: Are there many people from Fukui Prefecture around here?

A: There are many people from Hiroshima Prefecture in Central California.

Q: There are not many people from Fukui Prefecture, aren't there?

A: No, there aren't.

Q: Is Shinwa Kai still in Madera?

A: Yes, it is. I think the name has been changed to Kyowa Kai or something. I took care of it before the war, but after the war they held a meeting to reestablish it. I told the members that Isseis are old now, so I want young people to run it. Then they said, "We do not have experience", so I said, "What are you talking about? Now that you have children, you should be able to run it." They asked me to become an adviser, so I served as an adviser for 3 years, but now I am retired from the post.

Q: About how many people gathered for a meeting?

A: About 30 to 40 people. I am glad young people are taking it seriously.

Q: Was the Japanese Language School established after you came back?

A: No, because if I mention^{it} I have to do it. When I was 26 years old I became a director of the Japanese Association, the principal of the Japanese Language School and was associated with the Shinwa Kai. When I told what I was going to do Isseis never opposed me, and they donated money generously even though they were poor. But now we cannot do that because Niseis are not like Isseis.

Q: What do you think is the reason for that?

A: They are selfish and do not know the debt of gratitude to the society.

I went to a man's house and asked for a donation. He said, "Mr. Goto, I feed and bring up my children, so I do not trouble anyone." I said, "Is that so? You send your children to a public school, don't you? Do you pay tuition for the school?" He answered that it is a public school. So I said, "Then you owe^{to} your society, don't you?" He didn't say a word. A person who does not know the obligation to his society is no good. I think we should do whatever we can for the society.

Q: Don't you think it is to Niseis' disadvantage to be selfish?

A: I wanted to establish a Japanese Language School after the war but I didn't, as it would have given me too much headache. If they ~~are~~ were Isseis I would have done it, but now they are all Niseis and children are Sanseis. I would not do it as I am short-tempered. I always had the peace of the community in mind.

Q: Were there any trouble in Madera?

A: There were some trouble between individuals. Some people quarrelled after drinking at picnics. In those days there were trouble between Christians and Buddhists?

Q: What kind of troubles were there?

A: Before I came here a pastor of a Christian church said something about the Emperor and the Buddhists called him an unpatriotic man. People raised an uproar as the lese-Majesty case of Central California and took it over to the Japanese Consul but he did not take it up. Before the war Buddhist priests spoke ill of Christians and once in a while I heard Christian pastors speak ill of Buddhists, but after the war I did not hear anything like that.

Q: When you came here were there Buddhist priests?

A: Yes, of course. I think Rev. Asaeda came here around 1913. He seemed to have been a man of ability.